

Pillsbury "A" Mill.
Minneapolis, Minn.
Hennekin Co.

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HABS No. 29-5-A

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Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District No. 29

Historic American Buildings Survey
Wm. G. Dorr, District Officer
702 Wesley Temple Bldg.
Minneapolis, Minn.

PILLSBURY "A" MILL.
1880
Main St. & 3rd AVE. S.E.
Minneapolis, Minn.

Built by the Pillsbury Flour Mills Co., when Minneapolis was becoming the greatest flour milling city in the World. Parts of earlier buildings are incorporated in this building.

The building is six stories, built of local limestone. The earlier buildings which made Minneapolis famous as a flour milling city have been destroyed by fire, or torn down, and this is the best remaining unit, typical of this type of building and industry.

Wm. D. Don-
District Officer.

Reviewed by H.C.F. 1936

ADDENDUM TO
PILLSBURY MILLING COMPLEX, PILLSBURY "A" MILL
116 3rd Street Southeast
Minneapolis
Hennepin County
Minnesota

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PHOTOGRAPHS

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ADDENDUM TO:
PILLSBURY "A" MILL
HABS No. MN-29-5-A
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ARCHITECTURAL DATA FORM

STATE Minnesota	COUNTY Hennepin	TOWN OR VICINITY Minneapolis
HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME) PILLSBURY "A" MILL		HABS NO. MN-29-5-A
SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE		
COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES) 116 3rd Avenue, Southeast		
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE) 1881 (National Register nomination)	ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE)	
SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE) Symbolizes the role of Minneapolis as the chief flour-milling center of the United States from 1880-1930. The Pillsbury "A" Mill was the largest, most advanced mill in the world at the time of its completion in 1881. It was a masterpiece of industrial design from*		
STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE)		
MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS) Limestone, 8 1/2 feet thick at foundation, its ashlar walls rising to 2 1/2 feet at top.		
SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTABLE) Rectangular, 175 ft. wide and 115 ft. deep, 6 stories high with basement		
EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE limestone ashlar walls with rounded arched window heads (and windows on the top story), belt course below top story		
INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (DESCRIBE FLOOR PLANS, IF NOT SKETCHED)		
MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES In 1912 the interior was repaired, replacing the wooden columns and beams with steel ones. Concrete buttresses to stop movement of walls due to vibrations added in 1913. Use of water power to drive mill replaced with electricity in 1950's.		
PRESENT CONDITION AND USE good condition, flour production ceased in "A" mill in 1853, used as flour storage.		
OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE *which a standard of all other mills of its time were measured. The production from this mill made Pillsbury the undisputed leader in the flour milling industry.		
SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDING LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.) National Register nomination, Stephen Lissandrello, Historian, Landmarks review project, National Park Service, August 1975. Catalog of National Historic Landmarks		
COMPILER, AFFILIATION C. Lavoie, Historian, HABS/HAER		DATE Jan. 1989

ADDENDUM TO
Pillsbury Milling Complex, Pillsbury "A" Mill
301 Main Street Southeast
Minneapolis
Hennepin County
Minnesota

HABS No. MN-29-5-A

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3-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Department of the Interior
P. O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

PILLSBURY MILLING COMPLEX,
PILLSBURY "A" MILL

HABS No. MN-29-5A

Location: 301 Main Street Southeast, Minneapolis, Hennepin
County, Minnesota.

USGS Minneapolis South Quadrangle, Universal
Transverse Mercator Coordinates: Zone 15;
480100:4981060; 480320:4980940; 480260:4980800;
480040:4980940

Present Owner: The Pillsbury Company
Pillsbury Center
200 South Sixth Street
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402

Present Occupant: The Pillsbury Company

Present Use: Flour Milling

Significance: This mill is the most imposing structure on Main
Street. Still operative the mill more than any
other building symbolizes the role of Minneapolis
as a major U.S. Flour Milling Center from
1880-1930.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Built in 1880-81.
2. Architect: LeRoy S. Buffington.
3. Original and subsequent owners: Charles A. Pillsbury & Company,
now The Pillsbury Company.
4. Contractor: George McMullen.
5. Original plans and construction: The Pillsbury "A" Mill was
designed to contain two milling units, each with entirely
separate equipment and operating crew. The first to be
completed was the east unit, but much of the equipment was
delivered and set in place in the west unit while finishing
touches were applied on the opposite side.

On June 15, 1880, the foundation was begun and just five months
later, in late October, the building was ready for roofing.

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PILLSBURY "A" MILL
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6. Alterations and Additions: In 1920, when installation of a new waterwheel required replacement of several beams, it had been noted that the wooden posts and girders were becoming victims of dry rot.

The north and south walls had become badly cracked due to vibrations caused by the vast amount of milling equipment and an attempt was made to temporarily stabilize the movement of the walls by adding 12" x 12" timbers as diagonal braces. In 1913, C.A.P. Turner, a structural engineer decided that the east wall should be stabilized with monolithic reinforced concrete buttresses on the exterior as it sagged 22" out of alignment. Also, the west wall could then be stabilized by steel struts from the east wall.

B. Historical Context:

The year was 1881 and C.A. Pillsbury & Company, under the energetic direction of Charles A. Pillsbury astonished the milling world with the completion of the largest and most modern flour mill in history. The Pillsbury "A" Mill of Minneapolis was the result of one's determination to lead all others in his profession, combined with the talent, drive and loyalty of those who worked for and with him. The "A" Mill was an industrial and architectural masterpiece, a standard from which all others would be measured and against which all others would compete.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: The Pillsbury "A" Mill is a six-story limestone structure, 175 feet by 115 feet with a full basement. It is one of the few flour mills at St. Anthony Falls that was designed by an architect.
2. Condition of the Fabric: The building is in fair condition because of the vibration of the milling equipment and lack of maintenance.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall Dimensions: The Pillsbury "A" Mill is a rectangular structure 175 feet by 115 feet.
2. Foundations: The foundations are of Platteville limestone.
3. Walls Construction: The exterior wall thickness varies from 8'-0" thick at the basement to 2'-0" thick at the top of the building.
4. Structure System, Framing: Exterior walls are load bearing stone construction with heavy timber framing on the interior.
5. Loading Platform: This is of timber construction which was added after the building was completed.
6. Chimneys: There are six chimneys on the roof of the building.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: There are several doors which have been either bricked in or reduced in opening size. Generally doors and door frames are of wood.
 - b. Windows: Typical windows are double hung wood sash each with six panes. The windows on the first five floors were originally equipped with iron shutters.
8. Milling Equipment: In 1912, the mill was equipped with 256 sets of rolls, 18 run of stone, 8 cockle machines on the first floor, 8 brush and 8 cockle machines on the second floor, 8 scourers and 8 separators on the third floor, 10 separators and 8 scourers on the fourth floor, 2 separators on the fifth floor, 180 purifiers on the sixth floor and 15 dust collectors in the attic. Most of this equipment has been removed.

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9. Roof:

- a. Shape: The roof is flat with a monitor structure. There are two new metal penthouses for machinery. Roofing is of pitch and gravel construction.
- b. Cornice: The bracketed main cornice on the top floor is of stone.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans:

- a. Basement: A transformer vault, the water inlets (which are not in use) and an electrical room.
 - b. First Floor: Floor mounted small sifter, ceiling hung Nor-Well Hustler sifter manufactured in Fort Scott, Kansas and Amco Pressure Tank.
 - c. Second Floor: There are conveyor belts for the movement of flour bags and there is a staff lunch room in the northwest corner.
 - d. Third Floor: There are conveyor belts for the movement of flour bags and flour bins on the south side.
 - e. Fourth Floor: Flex-Kleen dust collector, Entoleter centrifugal machine, Allis-Chalmers gyration sifter, Barron stone grinder, Richardson scale, Mikro-Pulsame dust collector and a packing bin.
 - f. Fifth Floor: Great Western Manufacturing Co. sifter, Great Western Lure dry granular separator, Great Western Manufacturing Co. sifter and an Entoleter centrifugal machine.
 - g. Sixth Floor: There are flour bins.
 - h. Seventh Floor: There is an electrical room, monitor, elevator penthouse and a Humphrey man lift.
2. Staircase: There was originally a decorative spiral cast iron staircase in the center of the building which has been removed.

D. Site:

- 1. General Setting: The building is facing Southeast Main Street with frontage on Southeast Third Avenue.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original Achitectoral Drawings: Not Available.
- B. Early Views: Photographs are on file at the Minnesota Historical Society, 690 Cedar Street, St. Paul, Minnesota as follows:
MH59, MP3.1P, r29 ca 1885, neg. 2528.
" , " , r30 ca 1886, " 6740.
" , " , r40 ca 1895, " 152.
" , " , r48 ca 1890-1900, neg. 4723.
" , " , r61 ca 1976, neg. 01613, 12a.
- C. Bird's Eye View: Minnesota Historical Society files, MH 59, MP1K, neg. 6868-10.ca.1945.
- D. Primary and unpublished sources:

Hennepin Government Center, deed book and probate records,
Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- E. Secondary and published sources:
 - 1. Hennepin County Historical Society, Hennepin County History, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1981. pp. 4-11.
 - 2. Philip W. Pillsbury, The Pioneering Pillsbury, 1866-1947, The Newcomer Society of England, by Princeton University Press, pp. 1-5.
 - 3. William J. Powell, Pillsbury Best, A Company History From 1869, The Pillsbury Co., Minneapolis, 1985.
 - 4. Pillsbury, Pillsbury Best Flour, Product Profile, 1960, pp. 4.
 - 5. Ervin Jean, The Twin Cities Perceived, University of Minnesota Press, 1976.
 - 6. Professor Donald R. Torbert, Significant Architecture in the History of Minneapolis, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1969, pp. 64.
 - 7. Kuhlman, Charles B., The Development of the Flour Milling Industry in the United States, Cambridge, Massachusetts, The Riverside Press, 1929, pp. 16.
 - 8. Engineering Record, Vol. 70, No. 5, August 1914, pp. 6.

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9. Philip W. Pillsbury, Pillsbury People, Pillsbury Mills Employee Newsmagazine, November 1955 - October 1956, pp. 15.

Prepared by:
Farid Jean Sabongi and
Robert Shilts
University of Minnesota
April 1987

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was prepared as a class project for Architecture 5143, Historic Building Research and Documentation, a class offered in the School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota. The class project was prepared under the direction of Professor Foster W. Dunwiddie in cooperation with the State Historic Preservation Office of the Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul, Minnesota. Historical data was compiled by F.J. Sabongi and Robert Shilts, University of Minnesota, April 1987.